


INTEGRATING VOCAL AND MUSICAL TECHNIQUES  
IN THE CHORAL REHEARSAL

William W. Rayfield III





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**Columbus State University**

Integrating Vocal and Musical Techniques  
in the Choral Rehearsal

A Graduate Music Project Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Music in Music Education

William W. Rayfield III

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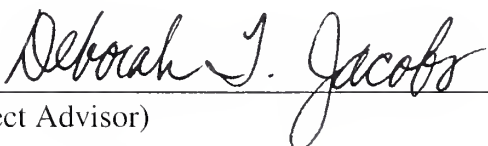
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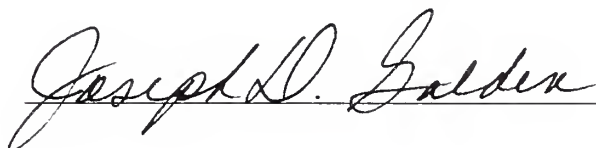
The undersigned, appointed by the Schwob School of Music at  
Columbus State University, have examined the Graduate Music Project titled

Integrating Vocal and Musical Techniques  
in the Choral Rehearsal

presented by William W. Rayfield III  
a candidate for the degree of Master of Music in Music Education  
and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Project Advisor)

  
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## Abstract

The vocal warm-up is an aspect of the choral rehearsal which is many times seen as nothing more than a brief period in which a singer in an ensemble “warms” his or her vocal mechanism in preparation for singing. It is also considered by many to be separate from the review of literature to be performed. However, if a conductor plans carefully for the warm-up period, it can serve to teach both vocal technique and the repertoire to be reviewed. There are numerous aspects of vocal technique that should be addressed during the choral warm-up. Among these is posture, breath, intonation, resonance, extending the vocal range, and sight-singing. Also, aspects of the repertoire should be introduced during this time. With careful planning, a conductor can teach proper vocal technique and introduce choral literature fairly quickly during the warm-up process.



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It is not technique that is the essence of art, but the soul.  
As soon as the soul can communicate freely, without obstacles,  
a complete musical effect is created. Technique sufficient for  
free manifestation of the child's soul can easily be mastered  
under a good leader in any school.

-Zoltán Kodály-  
(Legány (ed.), 1975, as cited in Hassemann & Jordan, 1991, p.1)





## I. Introduction

There are literally hundreds of things to take into consideration when planning a choral rehearsal. It seems that ensembles are always pressed for time in completing preparation for concerts. There are even times when “perfecting” every aspect of a one-hour program can seem like such a monumental task that we do not see the point in a thorough warm-up routine. As a result, some directors may have the tendency at times to rush through a series of monotonous, generic vocal exercises in order to begin the “real rehearsal.”



Example 1: “The Broken Triad”

Anyone who has ever participated in a choral ensemble is undoubtedly familiar with the above example. It is true that this exercise can be used as an important part of a thorough warm-up routine; however, many times we see this as the routine itself. Each member of an ensemble prepares his or her voice for singing through mindless repetitions of this exercise, but what purpose does it serve outside of that? What is learned in the process? Carl Eberhardt (1973) says in his book, *A Practical Guide for Choral Rehearsals*, that “choral directors do not sufficiently recognize the importance of general voice training and also of warming up” (p. 8). The choral warm-up is one of the most valuable parts of a rehearsal (Boyd, 1970, p. 103). It is not merely a cue for the



beginning of a rehearsal, but should be used as a way of teaching the literature to be reviewed and introducing choir members to proper vocal technique.

According to James Jordan (2005), author of *The Choral Warm-up: Methods, Procedures, Planning, and Core Exercises*, there are two main points when considering a choral warm-up: what is the purpose for it, and what should be taught during it. As mentioned above, time is always an issue. This being the case, I propose a third point: how does one conduct a thorough warm-up efficiently? The answer is, meticulous planning.

“When the director is thoroughly prepared, the rehearsal will be better, the work will require less time to learn, and the result will be an artistic and secure performance. Remember that the choir must suffer the consequences of each sin of omission on the part of the director.”

(Ehmann, 1968, as cited in Jordan, 2005, p. 206)

The director must have a plan for every aspect of each rehearsal. Though there will always be unforeseen problems that must be resolved, he or she must have an outline of objectives to be achieved. This, first and foremost, requires that the director know the repertoire thoroughly (Lamb, 1974, p. 27). Assuming he has a comprehensive knowledge of the music, he can develop a rehearsal guide that will assist in keeping the warm-up process well-organized and effective. The rehearsal guide should include everything that will take place during the rehearsal, including: the name of the works to be rehearsed, the order in which those works will be reviewed, and the vocal and physical exercises that will be used during the warm-up. These guides should be extremely specific, including even the smallest details of the rehearsal. The following is an example of such a guide.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

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Rehearsal Date \_\_\_\_\_

### General Exercises

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                            |

**Exercises from Group Vocal Technique Cards** (*core exercises, can be filed on individual cards*)

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Specific Exercises

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Example 2: Rehearsal Guide  
(Haasemann & Jordan, 1991, p. 27)





There are numerous ways to outline a choral rehearsal. The above is merely an example of a guide which has proved to be helpful to many directors. Any format may be used, as long as it aids the director in transitioning smoothly throughout a rehearsal.

There is no consensus on how long a thorough warm-up routine will be. It will depend on a number of issues, one being the length of the rehearsal itself. The longer the rehearsal is, the more time a director can spend on vocalises. Sandra Stegman (2003) states that “a brief, ten-minute warm-up period that is focused on preparing chorus members to sing, listen, and learn establishes the direction of the rehearsal and furthers ongoing vocal and musical development” (p. 1).



## **II. Body, Mind, and Voice**

The most effective choral rehearsals include warm-up routines that serve not only to prepare the voice to meet the demands of the literature to be reviewed and performed, but also to prepare the students' minds and bodies to recognize and produce desirable choral tone. When preparing the voice, a director must promote proper vocal technique. This can be a difficult task when working with younger singers. The task is difficult because, in most cases (unless a student receives private voice lessons), the choral rehearsal is the only place in which vocal instruction is given. Warming-up the mind requires activities both physical and mental. Hopefully, these exercises will bring the students to a place where they are completely focused on the tasks at hand. This must include a varied repertoire of vocalizes and discussion of aspects of the music to be performed. Finally, the physical warm-up must address posture, relaxation, and, for younger students, an excess of energy.

“Gymnastics and game sports should be encouraged, because they  
produce the flexibility and relaxation needed for singing.”

(Ehmann & Haasemann, 1981, p. 3)

Physical exercises should be a part of every rehearsal. Ehmann and Hassemann (1981) state that physical activity promotes body awareness and body-mind coordination, and it also strengthens muscles needed for singing (p. 3). These exercises are especially important for students at the elementary level because they allow them to burn excess energy and help them focus on the music. Though any type of movement will promote and require some flexibility, the following exercises, given by Ehmann and Hassemann (1981), may be helpful with younger groups:



- Lay down and press the back to the floor
- Pair off the singers. The couples stand back to back, pressing at various points up and down the back.
- Churning butter, crawling on all fours, rocking back and forth in a chair, playing leap frog, and playing dead (p. 3) .

Older groups however, (i.e. late middle school and high school singers) may appreciate a more subtle approach. For these ensembles, a director may choose to have the choir members turn to either side and massage the shoulders of the student in front of them. Older students may not have as much built-up energy as younger students, but they will definitely experience more stress and tension in the span of a day. A light and gentle massage of the shoulders will more than likely be beneficial in ridding these students of such problems. It also gives these older students a chance to meet new friends in the ensemble or briefly converse with those friends they already have. Following the shoulder massage, a director can lead his or her ensemble in a number of stretches which will further its members flexibility and relaxation (Brinson, 1996, p. 129).

Another aspect related to the physical warm-up is that of posture, which facilitates correct breathing and vocal production. This is of course something that is not instantly mastered by students, and will more than likely need to be attended to periodically during a warm-up, as well as throughout a rehearsal.

*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (1964) defines posture as "the position of the body and its parts." Directors throughout the world constantly address their ensembles' positioning by merely mentioning the word. However, there are some that suggest that the word should be abandoned all together.





James Jordan (2005) considers the issue in his book, *The Choral Warm-up: Method, Procedures, Planning and Core Vocal Exercises*, saying that when students recall their own ideas of good “posture,” most of them are incorrect. He suggests using the term ‘alignment’ instead (p. 39). In the human body, there are six points of alignment: the base of the neck, the shoulders, the waist, the hips, the knees, and the ankles. By addressing each of these areas of the body, any misconceptions of alignment conducive to good singing can be corrected. There are a couple of approaches that can be used in teaching correct alignment. Among these are “Body Mapping,” which includes the above mentioned alignment points, and “The Alexander Technique.”

The Alexander Technique was developed by nineteenth-century, stage actor Frederick Mathias Alexander. During Alexander’s years on the stage, he found that his voice became hoarse easily and often. After numerous visits to various doctors proved to be no help in diagnosing or solving his chronic condition, Alexander began to experiment with the way he delivered his lines. After years of experimentation, he concluded that voice quality was completely dependant upon the coordination of the entire body. The concept behind the Alexander Technique is that every muscle in the body from head to toe must function in a specific manner. When the body is perfectly coordinated, all areas of performance, such as alignment and breathing, will benefit (Pawley, 2000, p. 1).

Body Mapping, like the Alexander Technique, deals with an individual’s perceptions of correct posture and how these perceptions are many times damaging to performance. These misconceptions can lead to fatigue, vocal strain, as well as other technical, vocal problems.



These two approaches could not possibly be fully explained here, but there are a number of sources available on the subject (see Additional Resources Appendix for suggested reading). No matter the approach used, proper alignment should be encouraged by the director at all times, as it can contribute to proper breathing and vocal production.

Because the scope of this volume is the choral warm-up, I will not address the physical aspects of an entire rehearsal. However, physical gestures and movement can be valuable in teaching a number of concepts throughout a rehearsal period and should not be confined to the warm-up only.

“When students need to listen carefully and think about the new  
and varied exercises, they are likely to be more involved in the  
activity and their minds will be challenged and focused.”

(Brinson, 1996, p. 129)

In order to accomplish any musical task, a choir must be mentally prepared. The warm-up period of each rehearsal should be used as a means for this preparation. I mentioned in the introduction that many times the arpeggiated, major chord serves as the warm-up for many choirs at every rehearsal. This, though it may be a quick way to “warm the voice,” is detrimental to mental preparation. Singers have heard this repeated pattern so many times that it requires no thought in order to participate. To avoid such situations, a director must vary the exercises used in daily warm-ups (Brinson, 1996, p. 129). If the students do not know what is coming next, they will have to pay attention! If



the choir is made to focus on the instructions of the director, less time will be wasted throughout the rehearsal.

This time of mental preparation may also include instruction of various musical concepts. For example, if a high school choir is to rehearse a piece written by Johann Sebastian Bach, it may be beneficial to discuss the Baroque period and the specific tendencies of that composer. One must be careful though to include the ensemble in the discussion and not bore its members with a lecture in music history. If the discussion is led in a manner that directly relates to the repertoire at hand, it will not only focus the ensemble's attention, but intrigue them as well. A director should also make an effort to design vocalizes that address specific difficulties in the repertoire and specific problems that the ensemble may be experiencing.

Finally, mental preparation may be achieved through the use of sight-singing exercises. These can ensure that the participants are truly engaged in the rehearsal process. This will be discussed in more detail later.

“Choirs...can and should be provided with regular  
instruction concerning the basic principles of vocal technique.”

(Hassemann & Jordan, 1991, p. 11)

The choral warm-up must prepare not only the mind and body for singing, but also the vocal mechanism. Though this is obvious to all choral directors, the method or process needed to achieve such a task may not be so clear. It is also important to state that this process should be used in order to teach good vocal technique for singing. If the only concern was “warming” the vocal folds, then surely daily conversations that take





place before a rehearsal would be sufficient. However, singing is a process that requires special skills if done correctly. So, there must be a process of explaining and teaching these skills. The process must be sequential, and based on foundational concepts. Many of these foundational concepts are easily understood by the members of an ensemble if presented in a way that reflect life experience. Examples of this are yawning, crying, and laughing (Haaseman & Jordan, 1991, p. 11).

Among this list of foundational concepts is breathing, intonation, resonance, and range extension (Haaseman & Jordan, 1991, p. 11).



### III. Breath

“Because breathing is the basis for good singing,  
concentrated breath exercises are essential.”

(Ehmann & Haasemann, 1981, p. 5)

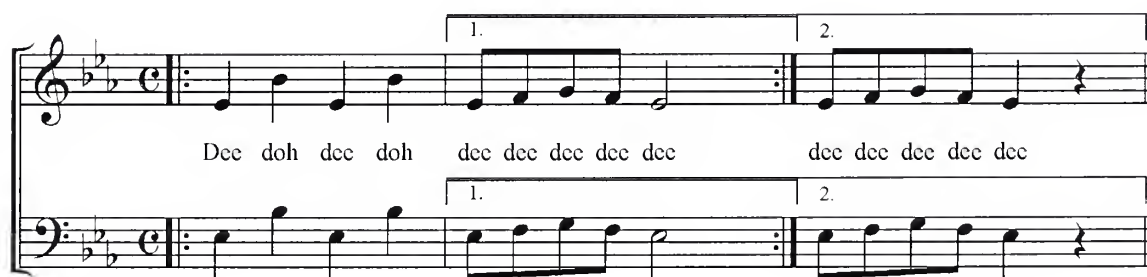
Nearly every aspect of singing is controlled by the breath. If the members of an ensemble do not have a thorough understanding of the breathing process, as well as complete control of that process, technical problems will surely be a result. Among these many technical problems are poor intonation, lack of resonance, and vocal strain.

Though breathing is one of the most natural parts of life, there is still a need to address the issue in a choral warm-up. The reasoning behind this is that breathing for singing is not the same as normal breathing in everyday life. James McKinney (1994), author of *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*, states that the essential difference between the two is the amount of conscious control used during singing (p. 46). Both inhalation and exhalation must be consciously controlled in order to achieve breath support that is advantageous to good tone. Until breathing for singing becomes as natural as breathing in everyday life, it must be discussed during rehearsals in order to achieve a desired sound.

To begin each rehearsal, many directors choose to use common exercises, such as lip trills, to improve or maintain proper breath support within their ensemble. This exercise allows a singer to focus on supporting a tone while facing resistance from two sources: the vocal folds and the lips. The process usually requires a vocalist to sing a simple progression of pitches (broken chords, etc.) or sustained tones while the lips vibrate. This can be effective and time efficient. Even singers with relatively little choral



experience are familiar with this exercise and can be expected to perform this task without the director having to waste time on lengthy instructions. However, the exercise is also limited in its range. As the pitches involved move into the ensemble's higher registers, they will experience difficulty. Because their lips must touch, the singers cannot create sufficient space in the mouth for singing high pitches. This can cause the sound to become shrill. Other vocal issues of which a director must be aware when implementing lip trills in a rehearsal are: tension in the jaw, in the tongue, in the lips, and a raised larynx (Jordan, 2005, p. 72).



Example 3: "Upward Leaps on the Breath"  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 3)

The above exercise entitled *Upward Leaps on the Breath* is an exercise intended to teach vocalists to sing "on the breath." "On the breath" is merely another way of saying breath support (Jordan, 2005, p. 63). The exercise features a rather slow tempo, large leaps, and a sustained, low pitch which will require the singers of an ensemble to closely manage the amount of air used in each repetition. If the release of air is not controlled properly, it is likely that a singer will run out of air before completing the exercise. Another possibility is that the sustained tonic at the end of the exercise, may sag due to a lack of support. The exercise also alternates the syllables *dee* and *doh*. The



singers will leap from the tonic (*dee*) to the dominant (*doh*). This pattern of alternating syllables facilitates a singer's need to create more space in the mouth by releasing the jaw.

The concept of singing on the breath can be further communicated with the addition of physical gesture. A director can ask his or her singers to place the left hand (palm up) at waist level. The right hand should be made into fist. In the tempo of the exercise, the student should move his or her right hand in a circular, "kneading" motion (down into the palm of the left hand). The size and speed of the circle should stay consistent throughout the exercise. This can be used as a visual representation of the constant flow of breath (Jordan, 2005, p. 65).

This exercise can be used universally to emphasize the importance of breath support, however, it can also be altered to relate specifically to the music being rehearsed and performed. For instance, the leaps at the beginning of the exercise can be changed to match prevalent intervals occurring in the repertoire to be reviewed in the rehearsal. This is also true of the syllables used. If there are words in a song's text that a director feels will pose a problem to his or her ensemble, they can be substituted for the given syllables *dee* and *doh*. One must be careful though to use open syllables for the higher pitches as not to hinder the singers' ability to release their jaws.

Another approach may be to have an ensemble take in a deep breath and release the air over a specified amount of time, using different consonants to stop the breath along the way.







Example 4: Interrupted Breath Exercise  
(Eberhardt, 1973, p. 16)

When doing this exercise, the singers must conserve the breath. This becomes a more difficult task when dynamics are considered. The louder the group is asked to articulate the “s” and “f” consonants, the more their breath support will be tested. After several repetitions of this quick exercise, at various dynamic levels, singers should become aware of the importance of breath support at all dynamic levels.

The above exercise can also be used with singers of all ages. Because it does not involve pitch, even the youngest choirs can experiment with variations of the interrupted breath exercise with relative ease. One such variation is called “Hiss Till You Can’t.” This exercise demonstrates the difference in normal exhalation and exhaling over a longer period of time by having young singers hiss like a snake (Edwin, 2001, p. 49). Again, the importance of breath support at louder dynamics will be evident. A director of young children must be careful to thoroughly explain the process and purpose for the children to truly benefit. These explanations will need to be quite specific, which will take more time. However, after a few rehearsals, even young children should be able to complete several repetitions of this exercise fairly quickly. They will enjoy the challenge and friendly competition that comes with seeing who can hiss the longest.

The examples given above are just a few of hundreds of exercises that can be used to teach the importance of breath support or singing “on the breath.” Though these



exercises, in their original form, have proved valuable over the years, a director should feel free to experiment with them, and make them more specific to the music their ensembles are reviewing.



#### IV. Intonation

“At the center of the ability to sing in tune  
is the coordination of the ear and the voice.”

(Grant, 1987, p. 5)

Intonation is defined by Ehmann and Haaseman (1981) as “accuracy of tonality” (p. 137). The concept is simple enough- sing in tune! However, good intonation is an aspect of choral singing that is not easily achieved. Even the most successful choirs must diligently pursue good intonation on a daily basis. There are many factors that can prevent an ensemble from singing in tune including: lack of breath support, fatigue, inconsistent registration, improper vowel modification, and hearing deficiency (p. 137). No matter the cause of poor intonation, it is an issue that should be addressed in each rehearsal.

As mentioned above, one major contributor to poor intonation is a hearing deficiency among members of a choir. If a singer cannot hear what is taking place around him, he cannot possibly expect to sing in tune. The ability to hear and the ability to sing are inseparable. The following are a few exercises that may be implemented in a choral warm-up to further a choir’s ability to sing in tune.



Example 5: Exercise for Intonation  
(Eberhardt, 1973, p. 11)



As singers participate in the above exercise, they will be forced to listen intently to those around them. As they attempt to match the pitch, dynamic, color, and resonance of their fellow choir members, the tone will eventually become more unified. Eberhardt (1973) compares the exercise to a piano being tuned. It is not until all three chords (above the assigned hammer) of a specific pitch are tuned alike that the desired sound is achieved. Resonance, dynamics, and color of tone among individual singers can best be unified by having them hum using the suggested consonant and vowel pattern (p. 11).

Vowel production, another contributor to poor intonation, can also be addressed in a warm-up routine. To do so, the following is suggested:



Example 6: Vowel Consistency, for Intonation  
(Brinson, 1996, p. 192)

This exercise is designed to make the singers aware of the differences in vowel production between individual singers. It features a simple, melodic pattern of thirds which students from young to old should be able to sing after a short demonstration. Also, a director can instruct the ensemble on the correct pronunciation of the five pure vowel sounds.

If an ensemble is able to perform the above exercise with ease, a director may want to go a step further by having the choir in four parts (SATB).







moo moh mah meh mee

Example 7: SATB arrangement for Vowel Consistency  
(Brinson, 1996, p. 192)

Though the intervals of the exercise have changed, the five pure vowels are still represented. This will give the ensemble an opportunity to align their vowels, while at the same time, paying attention to tone, breath, tempo, and resonance.



## **V. Improving Resonance**

“...the end result of resonation is, or should be, to make a better sound.”

(McKinney, 1994, p. 120)

Assuming posture, breath, and intonation are all under the control of an ensemble, the issue of resonance can then be settled. The resonating abilities of each individual voice will differ greatly. Also, the methods by which each singer achieves a desired amount of resonance will differ. However, choral resonance can be encouraged by explaining to the singers how the vocal mechanism works and by using simple vocal exercises.

It is common to hear voice teachers and choral directors say, “Feel it in the mask.” This refers to the vibrating sensation one gets in the sinus cavities when utilizing the head voice. This sensation is usually a good indication that resonance is present in their sound. Getting everyone to experience this sensation is relatively easy if the right exercises, such as humming, are utilized. It is also beneficial to have a choir sing sustained pitches while using nasal consonants (see example 5). If a choir is given daily opportunities to experience the sensations common to good resonance, and the full sound that hopefully accompanies it, the more comfortable they will be in producing a rich and warm sound.

It is important to note that there are opinions about when best to instruct a choir on resonance. It is a step in the warm-up process that, if omitted, can hinder the entire rehearsal period that follows. Some have even been so specific as to say resonating



exercises must take place directly after breathing exercises (Jordan, 2005, p. 73).



## **VI. Extending the Vocal Range**

“Singing in the upper range is an acquired skill. The vocal technique required must be built over a long period of time.”

(Jordan, 2005, p. 93)

As the vocal demands of a choir’s repertoire grow, there will at some point be a need to work on extending the vocal range of the ensemble. As Jordan states in the quote above, singing in the upper register is an acquired skill. This is also true of the lower extremes of the range. The process of extending the vocal range, both high and low, must be handled carefully to avoid technical problems and possible harm to the vocal mechanism.

When extending the range upward, the larynx will have the tendency to rise with the pitch. Because of this, it is better to begin vocal exercises within the comfortable range of the singers before working up to the extremes. This can easily be done through a number of other exercises, even those designed to address other aspects of singing. After the voice is ready to be tested, vocal exercises that focus on the area just above the choir’s middle register should be used. This area will differ between individual voices and choirs as a whole, but usually it will be between C and E for high voices and between G and B for low voices. The sound produced in this register can generally be characterized as “softer and more buoyant” (Robinson, 1977, p. 12). The following is an exercise that focuses on these elements:







Example 8: Range Extension  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 4)

As you can see, the exercise features a melody that begins well within the middle (if not lower) range of the singers. The second measure is simply an arpeggiated tonic chord (*do-mi-sol-do-sol-mi-do*) with a triplet rhythm. As simple as the passage is, it is perfect for extending the range upward. The leap from *sol* to high *do* in measure two requires the singers to move out of the middle register while keeping the tone consistent with that of the previous measure. As with other exercises shown, the syllables given are conducive to the space needed to sing higher pitches. After several repetitions, moving up by half step each time, the choir members will be prepared to sing in their higher registers without straining.

All of the above can also be applied to the extension of the vocal range downward. However, when using descending melodic patterns as warm-ups, the director must be careful in making sure that the choir's placement remains high. Also the choir members should be encouraged to utilize head tone in their lower range as much as possible (Jordan, 2005, p. 93).



## VII. Sight-Singing as a Warm-Up

“Sight-singing skills, like vocal techniques, are as much a part of the training of singers as are the rehearsing of pieces to be performed....”

(Brinson, 1996, p. 131)

Teaching a student to sight-sing is of the utmost importance, unfortunately, it is also difficult and time consuming. Because the process is often long and complicated, a director may be tempted to leave it out of a choir’s daily routine. This is a terrible mistake. If singers are never taught to read music they will be reduced to learning every song in their repertoire by rote. However, if a director is willing to spend the time necessary to teach this invaluable skill, he or she will find that the ensemble will actually save time in the long run.

There are many different ways to incorporate sight-singing into a choral warm-up. Some instructors choose to write their own exercises that feature various melodic patterns and intervals. Others may choose to use familiar folk songs or church hymnals. Still another option would be to introduce a new piece as the exercise itself. This can be a challenging and efficient way to incorporate sight-singing in a warm-up.

As music educators, our first responsibility should be teaching our students the concepts needed to become musically literate. By using sight-singing exercises as a part of an ensemble’s daily routine, we can be sure that they are well on their way.



## **VIII. Conclusion**

The choral warm-up is a process that prepares the members of an ensemble mentally, physically, and vocally. Because there are so many aspects of a singer's development that must be addressed during a warm-up period, it can at times be a time consuming process. However, through the meticulous planning of the conductor, the choral warm-up can be both efficient and enjoyable for all singers.

Among the aspects to be addressed during a choral warm-up are: breath support, intonation, developing resonance, extending the vocal range, and sight-singing. Addressing each of these issues may seem to be a monumental task when considering the hectic performance schedules of many choirs, but they are necessary if we are to achieve a desired sound from a choir.

If choral directors will take the time to teach the necessary skills for good vocal production we will surely find that it is worth the effort. We will find that our singers are not only capable of making beautiful music, but they are on the road to becoming well-trained, musically literate individuals.



Appendix A:  
Elementary Rehearsal Guides





Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*Danny Boy*- Ruth Elaine Schram, BriLee Music Publishing Co.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☒ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☐ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☐ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☒ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Various Stretches, physical movement
- "Siren" ("oo")
- Sight Singing, introduce melody
  - Solfege and Hand Signs

### Specific Exercises

☒ Major Scale

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐





### Exercise 1: Major Scale

#### General Exercises:

Physical movement will be used at the beginning of the warm-up. The students will be expected to mimic the instructor's movements. These movements will include various stretches such as neck rolls and toe touches.

Following the physical exercises will be a brief period of sighs, yawns, and "sirens." This opening vocal exercise gives the students an opportunity to experience the natural breath support that occurs in everyday life through such activities as yawning and calling. By having the singers carry out the siren exercise using the "oo" vowel, they will also have to drop or release their jaws during the process. Also, during this process the students will have the chance find and practice using their head voices. The instructor should briefly explain the feeling of head voice and its importance to the overall sound of the piece. However, to avoid confusion, the instructor should speak plainly and demonstrate for the students.

The melody of the piece can be introduced as a sight-singing exercise. By utilizing solfege syllables and the accompanying hand signs, the young ensemble can be slowly introduced to the melody of the piece. This will be a challenging exercise that demands their concentration. It will also excite the students when they realize it is the melody of the song to be performed.



### **Specific Exercises:**

The above exercise (Exercise 1) is simply a major scale to be sung in unison by the choir on the syllable “loo.” This will more than likely be a standard exercise that is easily executed by upper-elementary aged children. By adding a crescendo to the ascending line, the students will be able to maintain a beautiful, full tone in their upper registers. This directly relates to the repertoire as the dynamic level should grow as the melodic line rises.

Though there are only a few exercises given above, they should serve to thoroughly prepare a young ensemble to rehearse Schram’s piece for unison voices, *Danny Boy*. Considering the age of the students (between third and fifth grade), it will be a quick yet challenging routine.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*How Can I Keep From Singing*, Ginger Littleton, BriLee  
Publishing Co.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☐ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☒ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☐ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☒ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Improvisation with Orff instruments
- "Siren" ("oo")
- "Hiss Till You Can't"

### Specific Exercises

☒ Pentatonic Scale

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐







### Exercise 1: Pentatonic Scale

#### General Exercises:

The melody of the Quaker tune, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, is based on the pentatonic scale. This alone offers a number of warm-up possibilities. For instance, an elementary school choir director may choose to have his or her choir improvise on common Orff instruments such as the xylophone. This serves not only as a good physical activity for the students, but also to introduce the choir to the pentatonic scale. However, this exercise must be carefully planned. If the instruments are not prepared (in place with unneeded bars removed) the exercise will take a great deal of time. It is best to have this at the beginning of the warm-up as not to waste valuable time moving equipment.

Again, the vocal “siren,” on the syllable “oo,” is used to aid in finding the head voice. Students should be given the chance to experience the vocal freedom of yawning, sighing, and imitating a siren. It also gives them a chance to release some energy before rehearsing the repertoire.

Finally, the ensemble should be made aware of the importance of breath. Finishing the rather long phrases featured in *How Can I Keep from Singing* could be extremely difficult for a young singer if attention is not paid to breath support. By using the “Hiss Till You Can’t” exercise, the students will become more familiar with the concept of breath support. They should also be asked to “hiss” at various dynamic levels



to gain understanding of the differences between breathing for *fortissimo* and *pianissimo* singing.

### **Specific Exercises:**

After the students experience the pentatonic scale by playing the related pitches on the xylophone, they can then be asked to sing the scale in unison (see Example 1 above). The tonality will then be more evident. Solfege can be used along with the accompanying hand signs. The exercise may also be performed using the “oo” syllable. Using “oo,” the students will have to release the jaw creating sufficient space for proper pronunciation of the syllable. Also, the rounded shape of the lips will assist in keeping the tone warm. Littleton includes performance notes for *How Can I Keep from Singing*. These notes support the need for slight crescendo as the melodic line ascends. This can be easily incorporated in the pentatonic scale exercise by having the choir members sing louder on the way up the scale and softer on the way down.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*Fare You Well*- Ruth Elaine Schram, BriLee Music Publishing  
Co.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☐ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☒ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☐ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☒ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Rubato, Game
- Breath Exercise, Unison "la"
- "Siren" ("oo")

### Specific Exercises

☒ Arpeggiated Chord (Major)

☐

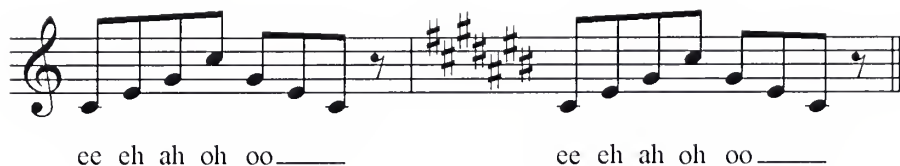
☒ Octave Leaps

☐

☐

☐





### Exercise 1: Arpeggiated Chord



### Exercise 2: Octave Leaps

### General Exercises:

The general exercises listed for *Fare You Well* by Ruth Elaine Schram, include a game to teach the concept of *rubato*, a breathing exercise, and the vocal “siren.”

The *rubato* activity should be used to teach the students that a steady beat (which is taught on a daily basis in the elementary classroom) may at times, slow down or speed up. The instructor should emphasize the importance of watching the conductor. The idea of the game is simple. In unison, the young ensemble should sing even quarter notes that reflect the conductor’s gestures (clapping, conducting, etc.). After a steady beat has been established, the conductor should begin to make his or her gestures faster or slower. This will ensure that the students are aware that the tempo may fluctuate throughout the piece. Also, the singers will see the importance of focusing on the conductor. To make certain





that the students are indeed watching, audible cues such as clapping and snapping may want to be avoided.

The breathing exercise mentioned above should be done to make the students aware of breath support and phrase length. The students should be asked to sing together in unison. The instructor can then indicate dynamic changes through gestures or verbal cues. One might consider having the ensemble hold this pitch at a specific dynamic level for the duration of a majority of the phrases in *Fare You Well* (four measures).

The “siren” has been previously explained above, and will not be further explained here.

### **Specific Exercises:**

The arpeggiated chord (Exercise 1) should be used first so that the students can experience the tonality of the piece to be rehearsed. It will also introduce the opening phrase of the piece as it is simply an arpeggiated chord (this pattern repeats with each verse).

Following the above exercise, should be a series of octave leaps (Exercise 2). Keeping a desirable tone during this exercise and tuning the interval involved will be challenging for students of this age, so the expectations of the director must be carefully explained. Because the octave leap is a prevalent interval in the melody of *Fare You Well*, this exercise, if done carefully, should benefit both the students and the rehearsal period.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

May the Road Rise to Meet You- Ruth Elaine Schram, BriLee  
Publishing Co.

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### General Exercises

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                            |

- Stretches, Physical Movement
  - Trace Phrases Throughout Warm-up
- Sight-Singing, Follow Hand Signs of Director

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Arpeggiated Chord 1-3-5-1</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Legato at a Slow Tempo"</u>  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





Exercise 1: Arpeggiated Chord, 1-3-5-1



Exercise 2: "Legato at a Slow Tempo"  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 1)

### General Exercises:

A series of stretches will be done at the beginning of the warm-up process. This will give the students an opportunity to loosen up muscles and burn a bit of energy after a long day of sitting still in a desk. There is no set routine for this process, but it is wise to instruct the members of the ensemble to focus on the joints in the body (i.e. wrists, elbows, neck, shoulders, etc.). Whatever the stretch being used, it may be beneficial to demonstrate it for the singers. This will help the students to avoid any injuries due to over extending any joint or muscle.

Another physical activity from which the young singer can profit is tracing phrases with their fingers. A melodic pattern can be introduced, and after demonstrating the process, the students can follow the phrase helping them to internalize its contour. It



will also be a visual aid to help the students avoid accenting notes involved in larger leaps.

Since the melody of *May the Road Rise to Meet You* by Ruth Elaine Schram, moves by step in most cases, it may be possible to introduce the melody with a sight-singing exercise. The director can introduce the melody by using Kodály hand signs and having the students sing the corresponding pitches. This will of course take time, but it will greatly benefit the singers in the learning process. This can also be a possible method of assessment for the teacher.

### **Specific Exercises:**

*May the Road Rise to Meet You* is a piece in which the choir is asked to sing *legato*. This can be addressed using Exercise 1. When doing this exercise, the singers must be told that the leaps in the vocal line, especially that of *sol* to *do* must be smooth. Again, tracing the melody with the finger may be helpful in this exercise.

To further emphasize the legato line, one can use the “Legato at a Slow Tempo” exercise (Exercise 2) suggested by Marilyn Shernenberger and James Jordan (2004) in their book, *The Choral Warm-up, Core Vocal Exercises*. Though the exercise is intended for older singers, it is not difficult technically. If explained in the right way, the exercise can be advantageous in the elementary choir rehearsal.





Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

Kyrie Eleison- Sonja Poorman, BriLee Music Publishing Co.

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### General Exercises

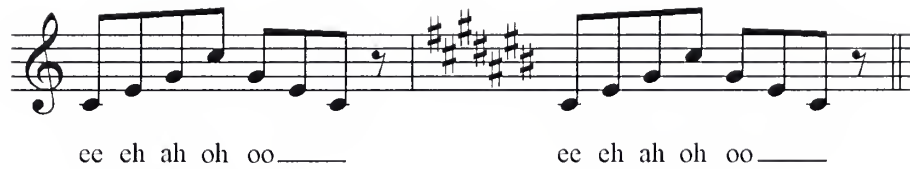
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                                       |

- "Siren"
- "Hiss Till You Can't"

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Legato at a Slow Tempo"</u>  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Arpeggiated Chord 1-3-5-1</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





Exercise 1: Arpeggiated chord, 1-3-5-1



Exercise 2: “Legato at a Slow Tempo”  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 1)

### General Exercises:

The general exercises that begin the rehearsal of *Kyrie Eleison* by Sonja Poorman, are the “siren” and “Hiss Till You Can’t.” Both have been explained previously and require no further explanation here.

### Specific Exercises:

Poorman’s setting of *Kyrie Eleison* calls for a *legato* line. This *legato* is not only suggested by the text, but also suggested in the tempo marking, *Gentle and Flowing*. To ensure that the students fully comprehend the concept of *legato*, it should be addressed in the warm-up routine. The arpeggiated, major chord (Example 1) will give the singers the opportunity to experience a legato line while singing leaps of thirds and fourths. This exercise will also familiarize the students with bits and pieces of the repertoire as each phrase begins with a major triad in first inversion. Because the text is in Latin, it may be



a good idea to have the ensemble do this exercise using the five pure vowels. This will create an opportunity to explain the text and how carefully it must be pronounced.

“Legato at a Slow Tempo,” may also be used to further the discussion of *legato*. Again, the director’s expectations should be given. Demonstrations will also be helpful in using this exercise



Appendix B:

Middle School Rehearsal Guides





Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*How Old Do Ya' Have To Be To Sing the Blues-* Russ Robinson,  
Galleria Press

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### General Exercises

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                            |

- Jazz Discussion
  - Rhythmic Qualities
- Incorporate Movement, Swaying to Jazz Rhythm

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>5-1, Blues Rhythm</u>         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Arpeggiated Triad (major)</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





Exercise 1: 5-1, with blues swing



Exercise 2: Arpeggiated Triad (major)

### General Exercises:

The general exercises involved in preparation to rehearse *How Old Do Ya' Have To Be To Sing The Blues* by Russ Robinson, include discussing the characteristics of blues and jazz, swinging rhythm, and movement for further understanding. The piece calls for a swinging rhythm which must be explained if the singers are to understand the written music. Furthermore, the singers should be asked to move (i.e. sway, clap, etc.) in a manner that reflects the rhythmic characteristics of the piece. This will serve in keeping the students' attention, as well as giving them an opportunity to get out of their seats and move.

### Specific Exercises:

The two vocalises seen above (the arpeggiated major chord and walking down the scale from 5 to 1) are easily executed by students of this age. They have heard them many times before, however they are made much more interesting when the swinging



rhythm is incorporated. By taking a familiar exercise (which will save time) and integrating a new element such as swinging rhythm, the students will not be as likely to lose interest. The simplicity of the pitches will allow the singers to focus on the rhythmic qualities of the exercises. It may be effective to carry out these exercises using the syllables *doo-ba* as they are common throughout *How Old Do Ya' Have To Be To Sing The Blues*.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

Hand 'n Hand- Arr. Dick Averre, Belwin Mills Publishing Co.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☐ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☒ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☐ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☐ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Game, Identify the Meter

### Specific Exercises

☒ Third Leaps (solfege)

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☒ 1-5 (Humming)

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_







Exercise 1: Third Leaps, (solfege)



Exercise 2: 5-1, humming

### General Exercises:

To break the monotony of day-to-day warm-up routines, it is a good idea to prepare the minds of younger singers with something more than triads and other repeated patterns. *Hand In Hand* arranged by Dick Averre lends itself to such activities by utilizing meter changes before each phrase. Though these meter changes do not significantly effect the vocal lines, it is a great opportunity to teach yet another aspect of music. A simple game can be developed to have students identify and demonstrate changing meters. When the director is satisfied that the students understand the concept of changing meters, he or she may then proceed in the warm-up routine. Form can also be discussed at this point as the meter changes indicate the onset of a number of phrases.

### Specific Exercises:

The group vocalises shown above are good way to prepare the voice for this piece. The first, suggested by Barbara Brinson (1996, p. 192), can be used for its



similarity to the melody. Because the melody of *Hand in Hand* features a number of thirds, it will benefit the students by hearing this particular interval.

Finally, the students humming pitches (from scale degree 5 to scale degree 1) will allow the students to experience a feeling of resonance in their voice. It should be easy to maintain the placement of the sound since the ranges of the vocal lines are fairly narrow.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

1. Should Fancy Cease (from Three Canons for Voice)-

Vincent Persichetti, Elkan-Vogel Inc.

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### General Exercises

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Posture                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                            |

- Various Stretches
  - Address Posture
- "Siren"

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Arpeggiated Triad (minor)</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Octave Leaps</u>              | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



**General Exercises:**

One physical activity not yet discussed is discussing and establishing good posture. This is an aspect of singing that should be emphasized frequently to an ensemble of this age. I only mention it here because of the moderately demanding range of the theme featured in Persichetti's *Should Fancy Cease*. If good posture and sufficient breath support are not used by the singers, the tone will surely be lacking in quality.

**Specific Exercises:**

Because the arpeggiated triad and octave leap exercises have been shown and discussed previously, I will not list them again here. However, I will mention that the arpeggiated triad should be in the minor mode to reflect the tonality of the piece. Also, the onset of the theme is a perfect octave which justifies the following octave leap exercise. The syllables "oo" and "ah" should be used during the octave leap exercise. This not only allows the students to create sufficient space in their mouths, but it also directly relates to the text of the piece.





Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*2. Preface to Canons (from Three Canons for Voice)-*

Vincent Persichetti, Elkan-Vogel Inc.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☐ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☒ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☐ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☐ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Discuss Text

- Discussion of Form

- Sight-singing, melody (using solfege)

- "Hiss Till You Can't"

### Specific Exercises

☒ "Upward Leaps on Breath..." ☐

☐ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

☐ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





“Upward Leaps on the Breath, with Line”  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 3)

### General Exercises:

The text of Persichetti’s *Preface to Canons* written by Herman Reichenbach, is a perfect way to both introduce the form of the piece as well as the methods of rehearsing it. The following is the text of the piece:

“The primary element of a canon is not the score but the melody. The canonic setting should not be tried before the melody is completely mastered. It is deplorable if a piano is necessary for studying the tune: it is entirely out of the question to use the piano for the polyphonic set-up. This has to be done a cappella.”

(Persichetti, 1947, p. 4-5)

This text can be used to challenge to the students. The challenge is to learn the melody without the use of piano accompaniment. Hopefully, this will motivate the students to put forth their best efforts in the following sight-singing exercise. Solfege syllables should be used to further facilitate the students in the process. This exercise must be carefully planned if it is to move quickly and without trouble.



“Hiss Till You Can’t” will serve in once again reminding the students of proper breath support. This support will be needed in the fast-paced, relentless eighth notes featured in the piece.

### **Specific Exercises:**

“Upward leaps on the breath, with line,” suggested by Shenenberger and Jordan (2004) will further emphasize breath support (p. 3). The kneading motions mentioned above (III. Breath) may be incorporated as visual representation of the movement of the breath.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

3. Hallelujah, Bum Again (from Three Canons for Voice)-

Vincent Persichetti, Elkan-Vogel Inc.

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### General Exercises

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                                       |

- "The Call"

### Specific Exercises

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Minor Scale (raised 6)</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





### **General Exercises:**

The general exercises selected for this particular warm-up are the “call” and a breath exercise featuring dynamic contrasts. Because the third installment of Persichetti’s *Three Voices for Canon, Hallelujah, Bum Again*, features enormous contrasts in dynamic levels (*pp* to *fff*), it will be beneficial to have the singers call loudly. Because calling is a natural part of life, proper support is naturally used (Hasseman & Jordan, 1991, p. 44). When this concept is learned by the students, they can then transfer that knowledge to the musical setting.

“Taught correctly and used correctly, the call can  
serve as a vehicle for forte singing...”

(Hasseman & Jordan, 1991, p. 44).

### **Specific Exercises:**

The melody of the canon is in the minor mode and features a reoccurring raised six scale degree. Addressing this in a warm-up routine can be done easily by having the choir sing a minor scale on the syllable “oo.” When this is done to the satisfaction of the director, he or she can then explain the raised sixth scale degree and have the ensemble then observe it in following repetitions. This will be difficult for the group, but with thorough explanations and demonstrations, they should be able to experience some success.



Appendix C:  
High School Rehearsal Guides



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*How Can I Keep From Singing-* Z. Randall Stroepe,

Alliance Music Publications

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### General Exercises

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                                  |

- Resonance: Humming, Various Patterns (Triads)
- "Siren," Yawn, Sigh

### Specific Exercises

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Range Extension Upward"</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Legato Line"</u>            | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





Exercise 1: "Range Extension Upward"  
(Shenenberger and Jordan, 2004, p. 3)



Exercise 2: "Legato Line"  
(Shenenberger and Jordan, 2004, p. 3)

### General Exercises:

It will be beneficial to the students to begin the rehearsal of Stroope's *How Can I Keep From Singing* by briefly reviewing the concept of resonance and the need for it in this piece. Having the students hum pitches in various patterns will allow them to feel the vibrating sensations that accompany resonant sound. The resonance exercises suggested in the rehearsal guide above does not give any specific, melodic patterns in which to use, but moving by step from the fifth scale degree down to the tonic is a common pattern with which the students are probably already familiar. This may be an opportunity to incorporate any number of motives from the piece itself.

Yawns, sighs, and sirens suggested above have been discussed previously and will not be discussed further here.





### **Specific Exercises:**

The vocal lines of Stroope's composition can be quite demanding for singers of this age. Many of the voices (especially the first tenors) spend a great deal of time in their upper registers. This being the case, a director may consider using some range extension exercises to prepare them for such occasions. As seen above, the exercise titled "Range Extension Upward" will be useful in working the upper registers of the students, preparing them for these higher pitches. Also, the change from dee to doh will allow for more space as they leap from the dominant up to the tonic.

The final exercise, "Legato Line," will, as with previous pieces, prepare the ensemble for the legato lines required in *How Can I Keep From Singing*.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*Irish Prayer*- Doug Andrews, Hal Leonard Corporation

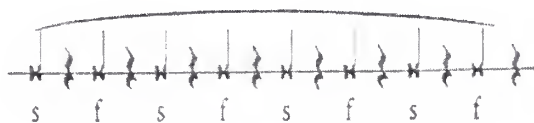
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### General Exercises

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                                       |

- Physical Warm-up
  - Various Stretches, Light Massage of Shoulders
- Breath: (Eberhardt, 1973, p. 16)



### Specific Exercises

- |  |                          |       |
|--|--------------------------|-------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Repeated Tone with Cresc/Decresc" | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Legato at Slow Tempo"             | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major Chord (SATB)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |





Exercise 1: Repeated Tone with Crescendo and Decrescendo  
(Shenenberg & Jordan, 2004, p. 1)

Exercise 2: Major Chord, SATB

### General Exercises:

A routine of physical warm-ups and stretches should be performed before singing begins in the rehearsal. This will aid in relaxing the students during or after a long day of classes. Following the physical activities, selected breath exercises will need to be carried out. This attention to breath support is extremely important when considering Doug Andrew's *Irish Prayer* due its long phrases. The breath exercise listed in the rehearsal guide above, suggested by Eberhardt (1973), will help in establishing breath



support throughout the ensemble (p. 16). Alternating the consonants *s* and *f* during exhalation should test the control of breath for each student. A predetermined number of repetitions should be established before beginning the exercise so that the students can manage their exhalation accordingly.

### **Specific Exercises:**

The vocalises chosen above will address breath support, *legato* line, and intonation. The first exercise, “Repeated tone with crescendo and decrescendo” will further the students understanding of breath support (Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 1). Adding the element of crescendo and decrescendo makes the process more challenging. The students may need brief coaching in order to find success in the exercise. The second exercise, “Legato at a slow tempo” (Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 1) will give the students a chance to experience the *legato* needed in the piece.

Finally, the major chord in four parts can be used as a listening activity as much as a vocal warm-up. The students should be asked to pay close attention to the sound around them. This will certain enable them to tune any problematic intervals within the chord. It is also possible to have the sections (SATB) move up and down in pitch, creating new chords with contrasting values. This will test their ears as they proceed through the exercise.





Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

Scaramella- Josquin des Prés, Fostco Music Co.

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### General Exercises

☒ Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination

☐ Relaxation of Body

☐ Posture

☐ Expanding the Vocal Tract

☐ Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips

☐ Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants)

☒ Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support

☐ Resonance and Dynamics

☒ Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)

☐ Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)

☐ Range Extension and Register Consistency

☐ Flexibility (runs)

- Tactus

- Clap Rhythm of Melody

- Controlled Exhalation Over Specified Period of Time

- Five Pure Vowels, Single Pitch, Legato

### Specific Exercises

☒ Minor Scale in Sections

☐

☒ "Legato at a Slow Tempo"

☐

☐

☐





### Exercise 1: Minor Scale in Sections

#### General Exercises:

The students' minds should be engaged with a short discussion of *tactus*. After the concept of *tactus* is explain, a brief period of rhythmic warm-up can begin. A director can ask a student to set the ensemble's tempo based on his or her own heartbeat, and have the rest of the singers join in. When this tempo is firmly established, short, predetermined melodies can then be performed.

Breathing exercises can be done by the choir quickly, and with relative ease. Simply have the singers inhale and exhale on a fixed number of beats. This should get the students thinking about controlling their breathing in preparation for the literature.

Because the text of *Scaramella* is in Italian, time must be taken to establish correct pronunciation of the text and unification of the five pure vowels. These issues will more than likely need to be addressed throughout the rehearsal.

#### Specific Exercises:

Because of the polyphonic texture of the piece, it will be beneficial to the students if simple exercises are performed in sections (Exercise 1). During this exercise the students should be instructed to crescendo as the pitch rises and decrescendo on the way



back down the scale. It should be pointed out this is to be done when rehearsing the piece as well.

“Legato at a slow tempo” has already been explained previously, but it should be mentioned that the director should address the general articulation of the piece.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*Salmo 150-* Ernani Aguiar, Earthsongs Inc.

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### General Exercises

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body   | <input type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                                       |

- Breath Support/Diaphragm Activity:

- Consonant Consistency during above exercise

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Singing on Breath..."</u>    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Arpeggiated Chord (Major)</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |







Exercise 1: Breath and Diaphragm Activity  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 2)

### General Exercises:

In beginning a rehearsal of Ernani Aguiar's *Salmo 150*, breath support will need to be addressed. Because of the piece's dynamic markings of *forte*, articulation, and relatively fast tempo, the students will more than likely struggle through its phrasing if not prepared beforehand. The activity suggested above by Shenenberger and Jordan will be helpful in this process. The exercise utilizes a fast tempo and quick, perforated leaps which will require the singers to consciously consider their breath support and from where it comes. Also, consistency of consonants and articulation, throughout the ensemble, should be paid close attention at this time. Because the syllable *la* is so prevalent throughout the piece, it may be wise to use it during the warm-up exercises.

### Specific Exercises:

The specific exercises to be used in the rehearsal of *Salmo 150* are "Singing on the Breath through Moving Eighth Notes" and the arpeggiated, major chord. By using these two exercises, the concept of breath will again be emphasized and the rhythmic qualities of the piece can be introduced. The rhythmic motives of the piece can be addressed with the following exercise:





By using this exercise, the chorus will not only get a feel for the rhythm of the piece, but also become familiar with hearing the differences in one another's parts. This will be challenging to some students, therefore the exercise should begin slowly and gradually speed up. As the exercise proceeds, the director must pay close attention to the "la" syllable to ensure that it is properly pronounced by the choir throughout.



Name of work(s) to be rehearsed

*How Lovely are the Messengers-* Felix Mendelssohn, CPDL

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### General Exercises

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises for Awakening the Mind and Imagination    | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing: Exhalation, Inhalation and Support    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Body                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resonance and Dynamics                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posture   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Five Pure Vowels (without diphthongs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding the Vocal Tract                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding Head Voice (yawn-sigh)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation of Jaw, Tongue and Lips                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Range Extension and Register Consistency         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphragm Activity (also use to improve consonants) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility (runs)                               |

- Various Stretches, Light Massage of the Shoulders
- Five Pure Vowels, begin with nasal consonants "Mee" or "Nee," Single Pitch

### Specific Exercises

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Making Space on Upward Leap"</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Octave Leaps (Legato)</u>         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>"Legato Line"</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





“Making Space on Upward Leap”  
(Shenenberger & Jordan, 2004, p. 4)

### General Exercises:

To begin a rehearsal of Mendelssohn’s chorus, *How Lovely Are The Messengers*, a period of stretching should take place. As mentioned before, this is only to release any tension that may be built up in the body.

To ensure that the choir achieves a unified sound, it will be beneficial to review the proper pronunciation of the pure vowels. This is easily done by having the ensemble sing in unison (octaves) on a single pitch while moving together from vowel to vowel at given times. Nasals consonants can be used at the onset of each vowel to establish placement of tone.

### Specific Exercises:

The *legato* and octave leap exercises indicated in the rehearsal guide above have both been discussed previously and need no further explanation here. However, they are relevant to Mendelssohn’s chorus as the melody requires the singers to execute a number of leaps while maintaining a flowing, *legato* line.

“Making Space on Upward Leaps” is an exercise suggested by Shenenberger and Jordan (2004) which will help the students realize that singing in their upper registers is





made easier when open vowels are used. When this point has been made through explanation and demonstration, vowel modification may then be discussed. There may be a need to modify certain vowels in the text of the piece. If explained properly, the singers should be able to apply their knowledge of vowel modification to their entire repertoire.



Appendix D:  
List of Repertoire



## List of Repertoire

### Elementary Chorus:

Littleton, G. (2000). *How Can I Keep From Singing?* Nashville, TN: BriLee Music Publishing Co.

Poorman, S. (2001). *Kyrie Eleison*. Nashville, TN: BriLee Music Publishing Co.

Schram, R.E. (2000). *Danny Boy*. Nashville, TN: BriLee Music Publishing Co.

Schram, R.E. (2001). *Fare You Well*. Nashville, TN: BriLee Music Publishing Co.

Schram, R.E. (1999). *May the Road Rise to Meet You*. Nashville, TN: BriLee Music Publishing Co.

### Middle School Chorus:

Averre, D. (arr.). (1987). *Hand In Hand*. Van Nuys, CA: Belwin Mills Publishing Co.

Persichetti, V. (1947). *Three Canons For Voice*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Elkan-Vogel, Inc.

Robinson, R. (1989). *How Old Do Ya' Have to Be to Sing the Blues?* Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Galleria Press.

### High School Chorus:

Aguiar, E. (1993). *Salmo 150*. Corvallis, OR: Earthsongs.

Andrews, D. (2004). *Irish Prayer*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Co.

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, F. *How Lovely Are the Messengers*. Retrieved May 1, 2007. [www.cpd.org](http://www.cpd.org).

Prés, J. des. (1974). *Scaramella*. Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press.

Stroope, Z.R. (1998). *How Can I Keep From Singing*. Houston, TX: Alliance Music Publications, Inc.



Appendix E:  
Additional Resources





## Additional Resources

- Brennan, R. (1996). *The Alexander Technique Manual: A Step-by-Step Guide to Improve Breathing Posture and Well Being*. Boston, MA: Journey Editions.
- Conable, B. (1991). *How to Learn the Alexander Technique: A Manual for Students*. Portland, Or: Andover Press.
- Conable, B. Conable, B. (1998). *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body*. Portland, Or: Andover Press.
- Conable, B. (2000). *The Structures of Movement and Breathing: A Primer for Choirs and Choruses*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.
- Gelb, M.J. (1981). *Body Learning: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co, LLC.



## Bibliography



## Bibliography

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- Eberhardt, C. (1973). *A Practical Guide for Choral Rehearsals*. Frankfurt: Henry Litolf's Verlag/ C.F. Peters.
- Edwin, R. (2001). Vocal Exercises for Children of All Ages. *Journal of Singing* 57 (4), pp. 49-51.
- Ehmann, W. & Hasseman, F. (1981). *Voice Building for Choirs*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music Inc.
- Grant, J. (1987). Improving Pitch and Intonation. *Choral Journal* 28 (5), pp. 5-9.
- Guralnick, D.B. (ed.). (1964). *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*. Nashville, TN: The Southwestern Company.
- Haaseman, F. & Jordan, J. (1991). *Group Vocal Technique*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music Inc.
- Jordan, J. (2005). *The Choral Warm-Up: Method, Procedures, Planning, and Core Vocal Exercises*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.
- Lamb, G. (1974). *Choral Techniques*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers.
- McKinney, J. C. (1994). *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*. Nashville, TN: Genevox Music Group.
- Pawley, P. (2000). How the Alexander Technique Works: Putting the Principles Into Action. Retrieved November 7, 2006, [www.alexanderworks.org.uk/method.html](http://www.alexanderworks.org.uk/method.html).
- Robinson, R. (1977). *Basic Vocal Production*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music Inc.
- Shenenberger, M. & Jordan, J. (2004). *The Choral Warm-Up: Core Vocal Exercises (Accompanist Supplement with CD)*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.
- Stegman, S. F. (2003). Choral Warm-ups: Preparation to Sing, Listen, and Learn. *Music Educators Journal*, 89(3), pp. 37-40. Retrieved February 12, 2007, ERIC database.











